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Book Review: *Ancient Nomads*

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the cultures offers no real attempt at contrast. While an exhibit may require a side-by-side comparison, a short contrast of the cultures in each chapter would have gone a long way towards meeting the authors' overall goals. Additionally, the authors tend to blur temporal variation within each region and overlook significant temporal changes.

Still, taken as a whole, *Ancient Nomads* is an excellent attempt to highlight many aspects of nomadic culture on the northern grasslands and to compare the two distinct forms of nomadism that developed on the Canadian Great Plains and the Russian Steppes. Though I have not seen the exhibition for which this volume is a companion, both, I think, should appeal to readers of *Great Plains Research*. **Daniel J. Wescott**, *Department of Biological Sciences, Florida International University*.

Ancient Nomads is the companion book to a Canadian Museum of Civilization exhibition comparing the cultures of nomadic peoples from the Russian and Canadian grasslands. Following an introduction, the "Grasslands" chapter describes the terrain, climate, vegetation, and wildlife in the Russian Steppes and the Canadian Great Plains. The authors then provide a brief archaeological history of both regions from approximately 35,000 to 5,000 years ago. The subsequent chapters provide an overview of various cultural aspects of nomads from the Steppes and the Plains: subsistence, food, transportation, housing, clothing, use of metal, spiritual life, and relationships with other nomadic and sedentary groups. The authors emphasize both the similarities and differences between peoples living in these two distantly separated but remarkably similar environments. Cultural similarities between the populations are argued to be largely due to the overall similarities in environment and the availability of large grass-eating animals. Differences, on the other hand, are also in large part due to the types of animals present in the Steppes and Great Plains.

Ancient Nomads offers a fascinating comparative look at the cultural ecology of populations living in similar environments but with different fauna. The book is written for a general audience and provides numerous beautiful black-and-white photographs of archaeological, historical, and cultural artifacts from both the Steppes and the Plains. Readers interested in the cultural ecology or history of the North American Great Plains and Russian Steppes will find the book appealing. It does, however, have several weaknesses: the authors provide no documentation for most of the facts; the figures are not mentioned in the text; and the side-by-side comparison of